

Why something needs to be done

There is an enormous gap in literacy standards between non-Indigenous and Indigenous children in Australia. The gap increases for children from remote Indigenous communities. Recent figures show that on average:

- only 1 in 5 children from remote Indigenous communities can read to an accepted minimum standard
- by Year 7 only 15% of children from these communities achieve that benchmark - for non-Indigenous students it is more like 90%. [1]
- by the age of 15, more than one-third of Australia's Indigenous students do not have the adequate skills and knowledge in reading literacy to meet real-life challenges and may well be disadvantaged in their lives beyond school. [2]

'The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students emerges early. Non-Indigenous students far out-perform Indigenous students in benchmark tests for reading, writing and numeracy in Year 3 and Year 5. By Year 7, the gap has widened.' [3]

It is a common assumption that being illiterate is a simple case of not being able to read or write. But the truth is that illiteracy covers almost all the skills you need to face real life challenges in a competent, confident way. And this directly flows on to your ability to compete for employment or go on to further studies. Low literacy levels prevent Indigenous Australians getting good jobs and functioning

References

1. ActNow.com.au - Illiteracy
2. Bortoli and Cresswell, Australia's Indigenous Students in PISA 2000: Results from an International Study, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Research Monograph No. 59, August 2004, page 11
3. DEET NT 2006
4. <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/aboriginal-literacy-rates.html#ixzz1oLqBu5Ct>



How you can help.

You can help by becoming a Member of the Association – there are individual and organisational memberships available - or you can donate directly to the Association. For more details please contact the Treasurer, Brendan Franzone on bfranzone@westnet.com.au, or on 0400 001 409.

www.katemullinassociation.com.au

THE Kate Mullin ASSOCIATION



PATRON:
THE HON
KEN WYATT AM, MP

Kate Mullin

Kate Mullin was a passionate and visionary ESL Literacy consultant who made significant and far reaching contributions to Indigenous literacy in Western Australia.

Kate commenced working with the Association of Independent Schools of WA (AISWA) in 1999 and then worked with the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS) introducing Scaffolding Literacy to young Indigenous readers in WA with excellent results. Tragically Kate was killed in a car accident in 2008.

The Purpose of the Association

The "Kate Mullin Association" was set up in 2011 by her many friends and colleagues for the following purposes:

- A tangible way to remember Kate's passion, dedication and commitment for improving literacy outcomes of Indigenous students,
- Continue the legacy of inquiry and research that empowered Kate to keep pushing boundaries,
- Seek funds for projects that will improve literacy outcomes for Indigenous students,
- Share findings from Association projects



What we plan to do about it

We believe that the Association can make a significant contribution to Indigenous Literacy into the future, which we believe is key to young Indigenous people gaining employment.

We have access to a wide network of specialists in the field – researchers, teachers and evaluators. It is the intention of the association to seek funding from various sources to support Indigenous Literacy projects that are underpinned by sound research. For example we would want to fund methods of teaching literacy that have been evidenced to be effective.

Information from the Indigenous Literacy projects would inform research and be shared.

Recent advances in the teaching of literacy to Indigenous students have been proven to be very effective. Let us take an example.

Prior to Charles Darwin University introducing an Accelerated Literacy Program into schools in NT, in one school of around 400 students 41% were more than 18 months behind their age level in reading.

After just 12 months of Accelerated Literacy, their individual reading levels increased by a minimum of 1.6 years. The largest gain was 2.8 years. [4]



Who we are

The committee of the Kate Mullin Association includes:

- **Professor Rhonda Oliver** B.Ed, M.Ed, PhD. Rhonda has been researching, teaching and publishing about education and educational issues for over 20 years. She has an extensive research track record and has published articles in a number of local, national and international scholarly journals. She continues to work on large research projects alongside practitioners exploring ways to enhance teaching and learning in our schools.
- **Brendan Franzone** B Teaching, Grad Dip. Brendan has been involved in Aboriginal Independent Community Schools in Western Australia for over 15 years as a teacher and Literacy Consultant. He is currently the Deputy Principal at Wongutha CAPS as well as the Literacy Co-ordinator and teaches English.
- **Ron Gorman** B. Ed. (Hons), Grad. Dip. Applied Film and Television. Ron is Deputy Director of AISWA and was the organisation's literacy consultant and projects manager from 2000-2008. He is a former classroom teacher who taught in Victorian schools in the early 1980s, at Culunga Aboriginal School in Guildford WA in 1983, and at Lance Holt Primary School in Fremantle from 1984-1991. He was principal of Lance Holt from 1991-1999.
- **Steve Florisson** Dip Teach, B Ed, M Ed, PhD. Steve has been involved in Indigenous education since 1978 and worked with Kate Mullin to bring Scaffolding Literacy to WA in the 1990's.

- **Shane Meyer** BEd, BArts (Training and Development). Shane has worked at Wongutha CAPS School since 1999 teaching Year 11 and 12 Aboriginal students from all over WA. He took over as Principal of the School in 2010 and continues to have a strong interest in the Literacy development of young Aboriginal people.
- **Gary Robinson** BSc (Chem) Dip Ed. Gary is an advisor for the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS).
- **Les Mack** Dip.T, B.Ed, M.Ed. Les has been teaching and working in the field of Aboriginal education for over 30 years. He has an extensive experience as an education administrator and a track record in the development and administration of significant literacy and numeracy projects. He has been a member of national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy working parties, and national project steering committees. He currently manages projects that enhance the retention and success of Aboriginal school students in partnership with schools, communities and industry.
- **Ken Mullin** B.Sc, M.Sc, PhD. Ken was Kate's husband and helped her with her indigenous literacy projects. He is a management consultant and was previously a company director.
- **Wendy Gorman** B. Ed. Wendy has taught in early childhood for most of her career. She is currently the Early Childhood Programs Coordinator for AISWA and has a passion for all students to be successful in their learning and life.
- **Jennifer Florisson** Dip Teach, Dip TAE. Jennifer grew up on an Indigenous Mission in remote WA, and has been involved in Indigenous Education since 1978.

Our Patron, The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP



Ken Wyatt has a strong Noongar, Yamatji and Wongi heritage and is the first self-identifying Indigenous Australian elected to the Australian House of Representatives, and the third elected to the Parliament.

Prior to entering Parliament, Ken was a primary school teacher for 16 years before serving as senior public servant in the fields of Indigenous health and education. He has held positions as Director of Aboriginal Education with the WA Department of Education and Director of the WA Office of Aboriginal Health as well as a similar post with NSW Health.

In 1996 he was honoured to receive an Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and in 2000 The Centenary of Federation Medal for his efforts and contribution in the fields of education, health and Aboriginal Affairs.

Ken believes that education and access to the knowledge society involves life-long learning and is the key to change and making informed decisions of choice. He is passionate and strongly committed to working towards achieving better outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous Australians and Australian society marked by justice, legitimacy and integrity and he has done much to anchor a commitment among many to supporting those essential virtues.

